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The Commonweal

November 12, 1948

The Industry Council Plan

John Brophy

Pathos and Pattern

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Of Soil and Men

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VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 5

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Prediction and Election

FACTS OF THE election had not been tabulated next to the opinion polls when this section was written. But win, lose or draw, Gallup, Roper, and Company scored very, very heavily in this 1948 election. It seems very possible that commercial testers of opinion were responsible for the basic pattern of the campaign.

When the campaign started, when the conventions were finished early this summer, the preference of the American public was supposedly shown by the scientists of public opinion. As of the beginning, Dewey was way ahead and Truman way behind. That was the convincing scientific estimate, and so it was the scientific job of Dewey to see to it that the situation did not change. From the practical, electoral point of view he should try to prevent new tensions and issues from intruding into the picture, already so pleasing to his party. His problem was to keep the public from changing their minds. The summer wave should be kept rolling untroubled into the fali.

President Truman's technical problem was the opposite. As things were in July, the scientists indicated that he was a dead duck. So it was his problem to bring into the campaign elements that were not there at the beginning. The Democrats had to find or create new issues and new tempers and change the course of the flowing political tide. Truman had to try out new issues and new appeals until he could find some that would reflavor the sample opinions, or else his goose was cooked.

From the coolly scientific, electoral angle, Mr. Truman's unprepared speech at the end, in St. Louis, seems to us the most significant. The headline said, "President Angry." Perhaps he showed it in these statements: "Of all the fake campaigns this is the tops as far as the Republican candidate for President is concerned. He's been following me up and down this country making speeches about home and mother and unity and efficiency and things of that kind. He won't talk about the issues. . . ." Very frustratingly on the other hand: "And I've brought those issues to the country, my friends. I've traveled up and down this nation 22,000 miles since the campaign started and 9,100 miles on a non-political campaign before the campaign started. I've told them—I've told the people. . . ."

Although Senator McGrath and President Truman have said harsh things about the pretentious pollsters, this speech of the President seems to us a very human acknowledgment of their position in current political technology.

China to Us

THE JAPANESE conquest of Manchuria led directly to World War II. There seems a terribly urgent likelihood that World War III will carry the dateline of the Communist conquest of Manchuria. The Chinese Communist Party, the "eldest daughter of the Kremlin," has, since 1927, taken advantage of the anti-imperialist movement, and, since the Japanese occupation, the whole kudos also for the upsurge of Chinese national patriotism. In twenty years it has genuinely won large sections of the country; that the towns have largely escaped Communist infiltration has proved not nearly so important as urbanized American observers had hoped. It is the "good earth" that grows red.

The cities, at their best, are markets, and, with no wares to peddle, they have proved starvation traps, and pestilence breeders. Mukden, the best arsenal in China, stuffed with American aid to Chiang, has fallen. In Japanese days, Mukden was a boom town. Since August, 1945, the shutting down of the war factories has caused widespread unemployment, and this summer's drought, aggravated by a plague of insects, destroyed the sorghum crop. Coal throughout China was sold by the pound last winter; if any exists, it will be sold by the ounce this coming one.

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China's relation to the US is not unlike that of the Low Countries to England. We do not want to own it, but we cannot afford to allow anyone else to do so. Japan's hegemony in China led us to refuse any deal or compromise, and was the reason for our Pacific war; a Russian overlordship must be viewed with at least comparable disfavor.

Premier Wong Wen Hao has resigned, and Chiang is openly slated to make a nice, long trip to America. Almost more completely disastrous than his very impressive military collapse is the economic collapse of his administration. Not only has inflation flared sky-high, but Government revenues have declined to a point where their coverage is a bare 10 percent. Chiang declared in one of the few interviews granted by him in the last two years, only a week ago, that one thing necessary was a thorough reform of military education in the Nationalist areas. But all such education, as everything else, has been in the Generalissimo's sole hands. All Chiang's misfortunes, and some of China's, are his own fault. We backed him; unfortunately, our aid was not sufficient to enable us to dictate to him, nor even to direct him; nor was it enough to prevent his mistakes nor empower his policies.

In his early days, the Generalissimo had the chance to lead a great Chinese revival; there might have been a cultural flowering of Chinese nationalism after World War II similar to the current Indian and Irish revivals. Men like Wen Ei To, of Pekin University, who was killed, poets like Chen-Meng Chia, and public servants like Hu Shih, who began as an idealist, were promises of a new China, not red, nor black, but golden. Nor was the economic situation unduly alarming —until 1934 the Chinese Government had never defaulted on any loan, nor even suspended payment of dividends. Now the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party has declared that Red forces control 24.5 percent of all China, and far the richest quarter of the country at that. And about 35 percent of the population—168,000,000 people are a lot of souls. Northern China may well be the next Communist objective, or, instead, Nanking, the Nationalist capital. Twice since 1931 Manchuria has fallen. But this is a graver conquest. For the Communist conquerors are Chinese. Liberty and loyalty once dwelt together; now, in eastern Europe, in northern Asia, in the revolt-ridden areas of Burma and Indonesia, amongst the Arab communists who have remained in Israel, as in Manchuria, the issues are confused, and no holds are barred.

The First Eight Hundred

THE WARMTH with which New York greeted the first new contingent of European Displaced Persons was in sharp contrast with the unbearable delay which preceded their embarkation from Hamburg—and the months of waiting which still confront the great majority of the 205,000 DP's still to land on our shores under present legislation. When the rather dingy-looking Army Transport *General Black,* sailed up the bay and past the Statue of Liberty, October 30, its pennants were flying; there was a salvo of salutes from harbor craft, while a city fireboat threw towering columns of water into the air. Moreover official words of welcome from Attorney General Clark, Senator McGrath, Mayor O'Dwyer and Cardinal Spellman left no doubts in the minds of the new arrivals.

Even more impressive is the prospect that awaited these refugees from totalitarianism past and present. Thanks to relatives, friends and social agencies, every one of them has a home and a job to go to. Everything is propitious for a new start in life that will lead to full-fledged self-support. The settling of these new Americans appears to have been most thoroughly worked out.

One of the new arrivals is not to attain his original destination. Dr. Joachim-Bernard Bronny was supposed to establish himself with his wife and child in Fairchild, Wisconsin, a village of 700 people which has not had a resident physician for the past decade. The residents there were all set to buy him a home and equip his office. The hitch is that the Wisconsin State Board of Medical Examiners refuses to allow Dr. Bronny to practice in the state; "doctors who are graduates of foreign universities" are not eligible.

This is not to question the usefulness of the Wisconsin Medical Board's seeking to maintain standards nor to drum up sympathy for Dr. Bronny, who has a job and a home waiting for him in Chicago in any case. The point is that Fairchild, Wis. is thereby prevented from having the doctor they have sought in vain for the past ten years. It is a situation which can be multiplied many times in medicine, agriculture, scientific laboratories, workshops, factories.

The Bronny case underlines forcefully the fact that all over rural and urban America are places needing to be filled, posts which DP's, with their wide range of skills, could handle most readily. Meanwhile useful jobs go undone over here and the refugees languish at public expense at European DP camps. When Congress next meets there is not only a discriminatory date to be got rid of; there is also the matter of expanding the number of immigrants to something more like the original Stratton plan.

For it is not only that the United States has need of these skills and this determination to survive without knuckling down to a dictator, but the welcoming of DP's is clearly a necessary com-

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plement to the Marshall Plan. European revival is sorely impeded by population pressures and a number of observers seriously doubt whether there will be any real recovery as long as the Continent has no productive work for so many proficient, willing men and women who must therefore eat their crusts in idleness.

Ignorance, Hypocrisy, and Infidelity

THE *Ladies' Home Journal* has published findings of an opinion poll taken to discover the religious and ethical content of the American mind. The sample cross-section were asked if they loved their neighbor, "when your fellow-man is a business competitor?" Yes, 78 percent; No, 10 percent; No opinion, 12 percent. "When your fellow-man is a member of a different race?" Yes, 80 percent; No, 12 percent; No opinion, 12 percent. "When different religion?" Yes, 90 percent; No, 5 percent; No opinion, 5 percent. "When enemy of your country?" Yes, 25 percent; No, 63 percent; No opinion, 12 percent. "When member of political party you think is dangerous?" Yes, 27 percent; No, 57 percent; No opinion, 16 percent.

Journal editors judge these and other answers harshly. ". . . Alarming is the gap between what Americans *think* they do and what they *do* do." But the way such questions come, it often seems a person is offered a choice between hypocrisy and infidelity. The "yeses" may be compromises between theories held to sincerely, and rather hurried self-analysis. The *Journal* is shocked by the evident hypocrisy of one-quarter claiming "the highest, transcendent form of love—love of one's enemy." It is just as likely that the figure is so low because the samples did not quite know that national and political enemies, whose views and actions are to be deplored, are still supposed to be loved.

The most shocking thing in the poll, it appears here, is the apparent lack of study and contemplation of love. Nothing but the bleakest ignorance could explain the reaction summed up by *Time*: "Nearly two-thirds (62%) admitted that on thinking over the past 24 hours they could recall no time when they might have acted differently if they were explicitly following Christ's injunction: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" That cannot really be hypocrisy. It must rather be vast unawareness. None of that 62 percent claims the stigmata; none reported a prolonged transfixion in mystical communion; none, apparently, died a martyr during that day; very few, most likely, gave away all their goods and left home—and how many, one wonders, during the 24 hours, were recreated, how many times, in their whole being?

Smog

THE WORD "smog" is somehow an expressive, appropriate word in this industrial age of smokestacks: at the sound of it, the nose seems to react instinctively. It is indeed a sensory word, suggesting man in a crouch, groping around a smudge-gloom trying to see and breathe. And last week, in Donora, Pennsylvania, a small industrial town on the Monongahela River near Pittsburgh, the word took on additional expressiveness, a sensory horror: a choking, asthmatic, crouping sensation that packed the hospitals and snuffed the life out of nineteen people. At Donora, smoke from the American Steel and Wire Company's smelters apparently mixed with fog to form a mysterious, toxic smog; for over thirty years the worst these smelters had done was to throw up a grey, sun-darkening fume over Donora, but this time, without benefit of wind for days, the town nearly succumbed to the combination of atmosphere and industrial waste.

While no one is certain yet about the cause of the Donora smog, the phenomenon is not altogether mysterious. In Los Angeles, industrial smog is frequently thick enough to obscure even a California sun, and so the city has appointed a director of smog control to study the situation and to restore confidence in the chamber of commerce. Soot and smoke have long been endured by Pittsburghs the world over; various therapeutic measures—such as magnetizing and gathering metallic dust particles from smokestacks—have cleared the air a little, but obviously, when smoke-fog combinations begin choking populations to death, disaster has intervened to arouse our civilized lethargy. Already things are stirring. Frightened New Yorkers are assured by health officers that their city is too windy a spot to hold lingering smog, while Governor Duff of Pennsylvania and Governor Herbert of Ohio both hastily ordered state health staffs to survey this asphixiating concoction that emerges as a by-product of mass production. Further scares are currently being investigated at Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, an atomic plant: scientists there, fearing the lethal effects of radioactive gases, have erected a 420-foot smoke tower to experiment first with harmless oil fumes in the hope of devising control measures before nuclear smog settles down over the bright new atomic industrial age.

As the people of Donora scrambled up into the hills out of their gasping town last week, the smelters nearby were shut down. And in a way, this tragedy of death, retreat, and shut-down in the valley of the Monongahela becomes a prophetic and symbolic spectacle of a civilization gagging on its own unsolved nuisances of exploitation and waste.

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The Industry Council Plan

A CIO leader advocates joint planning of production

John Brophy

IMMEDIATELY after Mr. Philip Murray became President of the CIO in November, 1940, he presented to President Roosevelt a plan under which the United States might make ready for a war which all far-sighted people knew was already upon them. Mr. Murray recommended to the President, on behalf of the CIO, that the Government make an analysis of its total economic needs for purposes of military defense and for civilian use; that it draw up an inventory of its resources in materials, productive plant equipment, and manpower; and that it tie the two studies together into an integrated national production plan for the period of national defense.

Part of the proposal was that the plans be worked out by or with the participation of a National Production Board, composed of equal numbers of representatives of organized labor and of management, with the President of the United States as chairman. In each of the basic industries there would be a similar board, to be known as an Industry Council, composed of equal numbers of representatives of the labor union in the particular industry and of management in that industry, with a Government chairman appointed by the President. In this way the productive abilities and knowledge of both labor and management would be made available to the Government for defense production under an integrated national plan and component industry plans.

As an example of the way in which these proposals would operate, Mr. Murray shortly afterwards submitted to Mr. Roosevelt a production plan for the steel industry. This plan showed that there was considerable unused capacity in the steel industry, particularly in Bessemer converters, which the industry should be required to put into use, and included a number of other specific proposals for increasing the production of steel.

At about the same time Mr. Walter P. Reuther, then a vice-president and now president of the United Automobile Workers of America and a vice-president of the CIO, submitted to President Roosevelt a plan for changing over the automobile industry from the production of automobiles to the production of airplanes. The Reuther Plan also called for planning boards similar to those suggested by Mr. Murray. It recommended industry councils composed of equal numbers of representatives of labor, management and government. It also called for a national economic plan into which the automobile-aircraft plan would be fitted.

Other CIO unions followed suit in making public proposals. Notable among them was the aluminum union, now a part of the steel union, which proposed a very drastic increase in the capacity of the United States aluminum industry. Fortunately for everyone, the necessary hydroelectric power was available at the dams of the TVA in the Tennessee Valley. President Roosevelt had called for an immense outlay for an air force. This meant aluminum. The government soon came around to adopting the production figures recommended by the CIO aluminum workers.

As time went on, various refinements were added to the original proposals in numerous convention statements, reports, and resolutions of the CIO. We soon recommended that the leading farm organizations be represented on the National Production Board, along with labor, management and government. Reuther stressed the addition of consumer representatives on the Industry Councils, and the idea of including spokesmen of the organized ultimate consumer, as well as the intermediate industrial consumer, was often discussed. The purpose was to get as complete representation as possible for all the various functional groups and interests.

These plans were never adopted in their entirety. In principle, however, I think we can say that the Government accepted them in considerable measure. The original defense and war-production planning agencies of the Government had been set up in such a way as to cut across the various industries. This was changed, and very soon separate departments were set up for each industry, because this was found to be the natural form of organization in our economy. The over-all studies of needs and capacities were eventually made and tied together into a total plan, even though this development was needlessly delayed and should have taken place at the time the CIO made its proposals.

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We were also given the right to participate in the production committees set up in the various departments of the War Production Board. These committees were too heavily weighted with representatives of management. On the other hand, we of labor have to admit that we were offered more opportunities for representation in these committees than we were able to accept, because we did not have enough trained and qualified people. This is a deficiency which I hope we shall overcome before too long.

★

Along toward the end of the war we reviewed our earlier proposals and our record of participation in production planning, and adopted a declaration at our CIO convention in Chicago, November, 1944, in which we said that our proposals were equally applicable to post-war peacetime production. This declaration was known as the Murray Re-employment Plan. It warned of the dangers of a post-war economic collapse and called for the development of a national economic plan for peacetime prosperity. This plan was to be developed and administered by the same machinery of a National Production Board and Industry Councils which we had proposed for wartime purposes.

At our most recent convention, held in Boston in October, 1947, the CIO adopted an official resolution on the Industry Council Plan, in which we again reaffirmed the applicability of the plan for peacetime purposes. The great breadth and scope of the industrial decisions which would be brought under democratic social planning by this proposal was also indicated in this resolution.

The statement declared that the critical decisions of big business which should be brought under the democratic direction of the industrial workers through their unions, and the people of the country as a whole through their Government, included minimum production and employment levels, stabilization of the rate and nature of technological change and capital investment, minimum wages and maximum prices, the annual wage, union security, the public relations and foreign policies of the big corporations, and the size and location of industrial plants which affect the daily welfare of all the people.

The comprehensive nature of these planning proposals should be apparent to all. The Industry Council Plan is no mere program for union-management co-operation. The Communists in our country always try to make it seem as if the Industry Council Plan was a sort of suggestion-box system under which labor might talk with management about labor conditions and make minor proposals for the betterment of production methods. We had committees during the war under the War Production Board which served this purpose and often did an excellent job, but the Murray Plan is something more, as anyone can see if he examines it closely. The Communists wanted to play it down in order to prevent the development of a democratic approach to the question of social control over the basic economy. The heart of the Industry Council Program is the idea of national economic planning. The councils are merely machinery intended to help keep that planning vital and democratic, and to preserve the participation of the functional groups.

In line with our various statements on these matters, including the Industry Council Plan resolutions, representatives and agencies of the CIO have been stepping into the center of many public discussions and Government activities related to the planning of industrial production and distribution. I have submitted a statement elsewhere which describes the rôle the CIO played in the development of the details of the Marshall Plan, particularly in keeping the steel program on the basis of re-establishing European industry and not merely giving Europe money to buy finished North American steel products. We also meet regularly with such agencies as the President's Council of Economic Advisors, where we have urged the expansion of the steel industry, drastic controls over prices, including the allocation of the product of our basic industries to proper use, price and rent control, and the kind of general industrial planning set out in the Industry Council proposals.

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During the war, decisions of the War Production Board were enforceable by law. The Government had power to establish priorities and allocations of materials and to fix prices, as well as stabilize wages. Where compliance was refused, it had the authority to seize the plant and operate it under Government administrators. The CIO has always recognized the necessity of making national economic plans enforceable.

We are calling for strong controls in many of these fields at the present time, particularly in connection with prices. While we have not stressed enforcement as much as we have stressed planning and democratic participation, the logic of circumstances, I am convinced, will lead us to place more and more emphasis on enforcement. Enforcement means, in the last analysis, commandeering, receiverships, public administration, or whatever name you choose to give it.

Ultimately it may mean public purchase of such of the basic industries as may be necessary to insure public service plus efficient administration. The miners' union at times has advocated public ownership of our coal industry. The railroad unions, following World War I, advocated

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public ownership of railoads—the so-called Plumb Plan—and, in the heat of a recent industrial conflict, some of the unions advocated public ownership of the railways.

During the war the powers of the President of the United States were very broad. Much of what had to be done could be carried out by executive order. The additional powers which had to be conferred by Act of Congress were few. With a return of defense and war conditions we may come back to a similar situation. If, as we all hope, more peaceful times may return, legislation would undoubtedly be needed to carry out the program of planning and social control or ownership vitalized in the Industry Council Plan.

Such legislation would be enacted in line with our usual democratic methods by the Congress of the United States and would doubtless become a major political issue. Some of us believe that the development of a really deep-rooted progressive political movement in the United States depends on labor's undertaking a great program of education among the industrial workers and the people of the United States generally, showing the need for such a program of democratic planning and industrial control.

For my part I am convinced that a program of this kind will have broad acceptance among many Catholics in the United States. It is in full harmony, to my way of thinking, with the labor encyclicals. Many leaders of the Church and laymen close to the labor movement agree with this position.

It also represents the general line of thinking among many elements in the labor and progressive movements in the United States. Probably something like the approach to economic problems represented in England by the Labor Party and the trade-union movement will develop in the United States in terms of economic planning, functional participation, public regulation and eventually, if necessary, public ownership.

This is the point of view also of the very large group in the labor movement of the United States which regards itself as essentially nonpolitical and has always thought of itself as purely economic in its purposes and interests. We are getting away more and more from this point of view, though it has been the prevailing outlook until perhaps the last decade.

In short, the thinking of most of the important elements and trends in American labor seem to me to be converging more and more on industrial planning and participation of the kind I have been discussing

I go into these matters in some detail, not because I think the course of history will be the same in Latin America as in the United States. The Latin-American labor movement, it seems to me, has always been more political in its outlook than ours, and more inclined to adhere to one or another doctrine. There is some advantage in this, because people get a clear idea of their objectives. Yet there is a certain flexibility in our approach which also has its advantages in dealing with realities.

I hope that North American labor may be able to influence the development of industrial planning in the United States in such a way as to fit in with the aspirations of the common people of other countries, including Latin America, as they develop their own programs and philosophies. It is important for labor and progressives in Latin America to know that some of us in the United States are thinking along these lines. I trust that we may be able to cement ever stronger lines of communication and co-operation in coming years.

Pathos and Pattern

VINCENT SHEEAN

WHAT constitutes the difficulty of pathos as an element in composition, in spite of its extreme prevalence in ordinary life, is its intractability to formal discipline. It seems to overflow and reject pattern, or sometimes even to defy it. That is what we find to be uniformly true in the novels of Charles Dickens, and often in those of Dostoievsky as well. Now, obviously pattern is the very essence of art: without pattern the work of art is not precipitated. So how can this universal human element contribute anything to the endless creation and re-creation of the master-workers?

Certain observations occur at once. We all know that great tragedy does not evoke tears, and it is a fairly well-established aesthetic canon that it ought not to do so. The pity and terror we feel before Hamlet, King Lear and Oedipus the King are a bleak onslaught in a wintry night. Our bare branches may cry out to the moon but we do not weep. It is also to be noticed that the tragic poets have themselves no inclinations to do so. There are more tears in Perdita's brief speech about the daffodils than there are in the whole of Macbeth. (Reservations should be made about Ophelia; she is both pathos and tragedy; the same is partly true of Desdemona, especially in a few lines irrelevant to the main pattern of the drama, such as "My mother had a maid.") Shakespeare's universality could not exclude pathos even from his highest tragedies, but I think it may be shown that it is more usual in his comedies and that even in the tragedies its part is subordinate and sometimes sublimely irrelevant.

When we transfer these observations to the musical heritage we find them confirmed there, too. The Countess in Figaro is a perfect example of high pathos encased in formal dignity, but except in a very few phrases (depending on the artist who delivers them), even she does not move the listener to tears, and aside from her, where

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is the pathos in Mozart's operas? It is in his chamber music, yes, and sometimes in the symphonies, but not on the stage. His infallible taste seems to have told him how dangerous it might be to style, to pattern and to the physical performance of music, since so much depends upon the interpreter when this range of feeling is admitted. The same is true with Beethoven in Fidelio, in spite of a subject-matter which gave every opportunity. And as for Wagner, whenever he tried pathos he muddied his waters even more than usual and became (as in Parsifal) a little bit absurd.

To find the element we are discussing fully expressed in music we have to come down from the heights and make the acquaintance of Tchaikovsky, Puccini and Strauss, among others. It almost seems as if the pathetic challenge-and-response (if Toynbee lends us the loan of his phrase) belonged to a lower order of artistic experience. If it is so, let it be so, and then what? Is it not permitted to live in a valley? Or, even for the hardiest mountaineers, are there not warm fires and food in the village inn, where greasy Joan doth keel the pot?

Down here we notice at once that novelists are more at home than poets or composers are. There is practically nothing Charles Dickens cannot do and get away with: even in 1948 it is impossible to read the astounding "death of little Nell" (the very phrase itself contains the essence of the pathetic character with all its dangers to sense, pattern and decorum) without at least a gulp. What it must have been like when Dickens himself read it aloud at his lecture-orgies one dreads to think. But whatever he did and no matter how "bad" it might be from the point of view of taste, it was always the full and sincere expression of a gifted creative artist, a man who could bring stones to life and make the wind sing in the chimney.

Now, in this region of aesthetic experience, not to be too often revisited if we want to keep in condition for further mountaineering, there is one artist who seems to me to have almost perfectly integrated his own gifts with his means of expression. That artist is Puccini. In his best work there is hardly a phrase that does not represent the very best he could do in the utmost sincerity and devotion to his task. He had precisely the means needed for precisely the expression of which he was capable. This does not happen often in any kind of creative work. (Think of Moussorgsky's struggles with the means, for example, or of Tchaikovsky's diametrically opposed problem of using his abundant means towards the right ends, or at least some intelligible ends; these men never solved their problems, although Moussorgsky's struggle itself produced a masterwork). In the case of Puccini we have a fiercely concentrated talent which instinctively felt itself at home in the vale of tears, but was never overwhelmed by it. This is why he was drawn to contemporary subjects; ill-suited though they might be to the abstraction which is opera, they spoke to his inner world of experience as no heroic legend could possibly do, and his own gift was ideally suited to express them. In the theater of the years around 1900 he found material which, if not itself masterly, could be turned by his favorite librettists into something Italian and alive, which was all he needed as a point of departure. Thus we have La Bohême, Tosca and Madame Butterfly, three works in which pathos is more continuously, sincerely and effectively expressed than in any others with which we are acquainted. They are what might be described as master-works of the second order, self-articulated, conscious and coherent, obeying their own laws, true to their own nature and destiny. How good such work can be does not always show in routine performances because, as I have said before, pathos depends (much more than any other element appealing to the emotions) upon the performer; that is a weakness but it can also be a strength.

★

These reflections were instigated by a performance of Madame Butterfly which is now being given, from time to time, at the New York City Center by a young soprano named Camilla Williams. Nobody since Geraldine Farrar has understood the pathos of this creation so well. The Italian dramatic sopranos never really make much sense out of Butterfly; they sing it tragically and it is not tragedy by any but the most superficial definition. Miss Williams's Italian, although good, has enough strangeness or foreignness in it to suit the character of Puccini's heroine (just as a touch of foreignness in the French suits Débussy's). Her singing, although also good, is not of the voluptuous Italian dramatic style and thus is much more suited to the emotional content of the little girl Puccini had in mind. She can rise to the occasional outburst all right, although she never throws away her resources. (As a matter of fact, the only place where I actually missed the extravagance of Italian dramatic style was in the outburst where Butterfly at last understands, or at least repeats, that Pinkerton has forgotten her. *"M'ha scordata!"* are the words, and in the Italian style, as Caniglia or one of the other great sopranos might do it, all caution is abandoned at this point for the sake of the impassioned outcry of the full voice. Miss Williams was perhaps a little too careful just here, but it may be remembered that Miss Farrar, a wonderful artist, was no vocal spendthrift either).

And what gives very special quality to Miss Williams's characterization is that she is herself of the Negro race, pale in color but at every moment distinct from the made-up Caucasians who usually sing this part. There is pathos in her very appearance, and it is the precise kind of pathos Puccini had in mind. All the racial and national implications of a large number of lines in the text are thus brought out as they should be—and as they practically never are. I also believe that Miss Williams's own racial origin and experience have helped her to understand her lines and fill them with meaning. This, however, is probably a phenomenon of the unconscious, and whether so or not, it is always musical in expression: that is, it is done by the color of the voice within the line composed for it by Puccini, and with far less exaggeration than is common among Italian sopranos. For this is, among other things, an extremely

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subtle performance when judged upon its own scale: one had forgotten that there was this interplay of meaning, light and shadow in Puccini's treatment of the subject.

Perhaps, after a performance of this quality, it would have been too much to let the child wave the American flag while the mother kills herself behind the screen. At the same time I thought it a hopeless misrepresentation of Puccini's meaning to give the infant a teddy bear at this point. It is true that the heartbroken Butterfly tells her child to play, but the toy that she gives him is the American flag. This is not and can never be meaningless. I have seen whole audiences of American soldiers gulping down their tears when this (the favorite opera of the soldiery) was given for the G.I.s in Italy. What they did not find offensive should not give umbrage to a New York audience.

And, as a matter of fact, what did Puccini mean by the use of the American flag in that place, or by the strains of The Star-Spangled Banner in another, or by the phrase "America forever," as sung by the consul, Sharpless? Was he not making a criticism? Is it not a valid criticism? And even if it were not a valid criticism, has the creative artist not a right to make it just the same if it arises naturally from his theme? I think so. Some of the lines in which Butterfly most surely plucks at the heartstrings of any audience are those in which she declares that she is an American, that the Japanese law does not apply to her, that Sharpless is the representative of her country, etc., etc. She obviously has not the faintest notion of where America is, except that it is over the water; this—like her reiteration against all the evidence that she "knows" *he* will come back—constitutes the pathos of the character. Then, when she is herself despised and rejected, it is her idea that her son cannot be, because he is a real American: he has fair hair. That is why she gives him the American flag to play with. She thinks it will protect him, as indeed it does—he is carried off by the American consul, presumably to forget his mother. This all may be unbearably pathetic, but no matter: it is what Puccini wrote and meant and imposed with all the violence of his superb theatrical talent. There is no law compelling anybody to go to hear Madame Butterfly, but if a citizen should choose to go, he is entitled to know what the drama means. The substitution of a teddy bear for the American flag makes this impossible.

However, up to that point Miss Williams's remarkable performance carries the full sense of what Puccini wrote. This was the heroine towards whom he felt the greatest tenderness, and throughout the second act, particularly in its first scene, one feels how he gave the best he had to every one of her lines. An "old woman" of fifteen, as she says soon after her entrance, without any knowledge of the world, life or time, a pitiful child, a little miracle of loyalty and grace caught up by accident into the inexorable operations of an alien world, she is the most complete musical characterization he ever made and he knew it. I feel certain that he would have liked Miss Williams's performance as he did Miss Farrar's, and if it is true, as rumor says, that the Butterfly of another day trained the Butterfly of this, it is only another instance of something which has occurred before in music as in life: no light goes out, torch, flame or candle, so long as there are hands to pass it on and hands to receive it.

Communications

CHRISTIAN INDUSTRIALISM

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. Cort persists in trying to reduce the question of Gill and the *Catholic Worker* to one of calling the extreme evils of mass production (concentration of power, big cities, etc.) the essential evil of mass production. And inasmuch as these extremes are *not* identical with the essential nature of mass production, Mr. Cort seems to triumph.

I say he is mistaken because Gill's criticism lies in the essential nature of mass production *even* as defined by Mr. Cort. Mass production, the technique of producing things in large quantities through the use of machinery necessarily involves the use of the worker in a position which deprives him of responsibility for the whole product. He becomes the "sentient part of a machine" in a machine process of making things. The human personality can be said to function in the act of making only when the workman is responsible for the whole of what he makes. Maritain says the sphere of making is the sphere of art and he also says "the formal element (of art), what constitutes it of its kind and makes it what it is, is the being controlled and directed by the mind." (*Art and Scholasticism.*)

That is a Thomist definition of making and overwhelmingly a Christian one. And I say the means of mass production which fulfils *that* conception of work is inconceivable. In mass production the workman could never have control over the finished product (control over a part or parts means nothing). The factory system, by definition, means the breaking down of the making of a product into *separate acts* to be *performed* separately by the workers.

Gill saw that Christian concept of work and he saw that definition of mass production; and if that concept of work is true then quite obviously, and I have tried to demonstrate, then mass production is irreconcilable with it. It becomes ridiculous then to ask him to think out a blueprint for a cheap production of typewriters that does not violate Christian values.

As for Mr. Cort's rather emotional appeal to us in the form of "good Mr. Jones" being dispossessed by a bunch of misinformed radicals, I think this business of the conceivably good Christian employer is as irrelevant as the idea of the good Christian slave owner. Undoubtedly there were good Christian slave owners who treated their slaves with justice and love, but that has no bearing on the intrinsic evil of slavery and its essential denial of the dignity of human personality.

Also, the taking over of a plant does not necessarily

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dispossess Mr. Jones. If Mr. Jones is a good Christian he should not be adverse to taking a place *among* the workers, and still retaining a share in ownership in the means of production, *thereby* making it possible for the workers to own a share in the means of production. No matter how just the worker-owner relationship may be, it still, by its very nature, means that some shall own the means of production (and thereby be economically free) and some (much more than some) shall not (and thereby be economically unfree).

And I believe the Thomist conception of private property means not simply ownership but ownership in the means of production. It is the only kind of private property that really means anything. It is based on the idea, the Christian idea, that man is a responsible creature and must control the things he works with in order to retain that responsibility.

As for the Papal quotations Mr. Cort cites, we cannot seriously expect the Popes to advocate revolution. We must realize that they felt an immediate concern for the plight of the workers and accepted conditions as they were and sought immediate, realistic reforms. No, the hiring, being hired contract is not unjust of its *own nature,* but in an industrial world it manifests itself in the continuing dispossession of the workers and the denial of responsibility in man, who is a responsible creature.

EMIL ANTONUCCI.

Wauwatosa, Wis.

TO the Editors: No doubt the disagreement among the editors of THE COMMONWEAL evidenced by Mr. John C. Cort's article in the October 1 issue and Mr. Philip Burnham's article in the October 8 issue is to be considered healthy. But the disagreement will never be resolved and move from the contributors' columns into the editorial columns unless Mr. Burnham approaches the subject with the same open mind as Mr. Cort.

Mr. Cort holds no brief for industrialism "as is." But he believes that the face of industrialism can be changed into a human one by the men who are daily re-creating it. The means he suggests is industrial democracy, which happens to be the means advocated by the recent Popes and the Bishops in communion with him. In his view, there is valuable work for Dorothy Day and her distributists to do—the more city workers they can persuade to move to farms the better. He knows, however, that nobody has been able to persuade a significant number of city folk to do this, and probably never will. In the meantime, he is unwilling merely to damn the system and do nothing to help those caught in it to change it.

Mr. Burnham, on the other hand, is as convinced that the system is inherently inhuman as the Communists are that it is decadent. He sees no possibility of humanizing it, and hence would waste no time or effort trying to make it work. Dorothy Day and her *Catholic Worker* take the same view, and are critical of the NCWC for advocating social security, industry councils, and other "palliatives," which in their view only serve to prolong the death agony of industrialism.

Let us hope Mr. Cort's views prevail, not only in COMMONWEAL editorial policy, but in our country and all other industrial countries. The Plant Councils and Industry Councils of which Mr. Cort speaks *could* so operate as to overcome precisely what Mr. Burnham says are the inherent faults of industrialism, namely, "unitary centralization" of industry, and "divisive separateness" of individuals. There is no question of the difficulty of establishing Mr. Cort's system—he recognizes that, and pleads only for a start. But his plan would be a much more natural and salable development from where we now stand than Mr. Burnham's "back-to-the-land" proposal." Let us have more from Mr. Cort on how the council plan may be established, and how it could humanize our industrial civilization.

WILLIAM E. BROWN.

Urbana, Md.

TO the Editors: Mr. Cort in his article of October 1, "Reform at the Plant Level," and Mr. Philip Burnham in his answer, "Christian Industrialism," seem somehow, groping in the gloom of social controversy, to have missed each other and one or two points besides.

Surely, neither "Christian Agrarianism" nor "Christian Industrialism" nor any other *ism* is the solution of our social problem, but Christianity alone. We shall not get a pagan society to accept a Christian social solution of any kind unless we transform that society into a Christian one. The way to do this is to do exactly what Gill and Chesterton did, what John Cort and Dorothy Day and countless others are doing on a small scale all over the world, and to do it on a large scale. That is: apply the principles of Christ to every matter, agrarian or industrial, economic or aesthetic, political or philosophical. What this really amounts to is to do all our thinking with love. We all of us do this sometimes, for a few moments of heightened understanding. We have yet to think with love all of the time. This we cannot manage by ourselves, but God will do it for us if only we will make room for Him. . . . John Cort is right to try to Christianize what we have.

MARION MITCHELL STANCIOFF.

A NOTE FROM GERMANY

Sunnyside, Wash.

TO the Editors: May I again ask you to print a letter—this time it is not my own, but my translation of one sent to me by an old friend, who lived in self-imposed exile during the Nazi years and publishes now a paper in the French Zone of the Rhineland which one might call a twin of THE COMMONWEAL in scope: Dr. F. A. Kramer of the *Rheinischer Merkur*. His letter is self-explanatory and his answer seems to me to be the shortest and most penetrating analysis of the situation over there. Mr. Kramer is a man of great integrity. I hope his words will carry some weight in the United States.

"We strive indeed most seriously to gather what the terrible great cyclone has left. I believe we have made

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a contribution in the effort to create a Christian atmosphere at least in some strata of the Rhenish population, although I fear that *Christianity* is fighting *rear-guard* skirmishes in *all* countries of Europe.

"As to your inquiry whether the Nazis aren't returning: I have a little difficulty in answering it. There is no doubt: Nazism colored by the person of Hitler and his bright men is gone and finished.

"It is clearly impossible and it makes no sense to divide the population of Germany into those who belonged to the party and those who did not, a procedure which has proved equally useless in Italy between ex-Fascists and non-Fascists.

"However, if you try to distil out the spiritual and intellectual *residuum* of Nazism you will find very strange results: of all people, the Social Democrats and the Communists, whom we consider to be our left-wing parties, are the standard bearers of what might be called in French *nationalisme de misère* (or hunger, stomach nationalism). The occupying forces have at times encouraged the Social Democratic Party. I am sorry to say that the British continue to further its cause in their zone.

"I fear *all Europe is drifting* towards a new authoritarianism, not only France, where it seems to be an immediate danger, *but even in England*. Even there, it seems, it will prove to be impossible to "steer" the masses by the methods of democratic parliamentarianism. These masses have lost the faculty to distinguish between their political rights and their economic interests."

I would not restrict this prognosis to Europe. We have those tendencies closer by. H. A. REINHOLD.

A WORD OF PRAISE

Springfield, Mass.

TO the Editors: We say a word of praise for Mr. Powers and his sitting in on Elmer Wheeler. The short sentences told the story beautifully (October 15).

We liked your piece on a society for the protection of young men. We feel you could have gone gloriously further here, but what you did was good.

Finally, we enjoyed the quiet calm of Mr. Rago's "Paris, A Sunday."

Good Luck. ISHMAEL AND AHAB.

The Labor Movement

The University of Michigan and General Motors

IT SEEMS that there is more to the University of Michigan than just a good football team. At least there was. Now you can't be so sure.

For four years there was something called the Workers Education Service which was run by the university and which, among other things, supplied help to dozens of local unions in carrying out their education programs. Altogether about 65,000 workers were benefited by the Service every year. Michigan is, of course, a state university supported by public taxes and many people saw in this education service an excellent way of making the university serve the people who paid for it. They also saw in it a fine instrument for teaching workers something about their work, their unions, their government and its economy, and for training leaders who would be qualified to lead.

For four years the Service functioned very well. Its director made a name for himself as an expert in the field. Everybody was happy—everybody, that is, except the General Motors Corporation.

General Motors complained about one class that was given last April. The university's board of regents became alarmed and rather than risk offending the great General Motors Corporation the regents suspended the Service while they made an investigation. That was amazing enough.

The Service remained suspended for three months. Then on October 16 Governor Kim Sigler and the regents announced that the GM charges were without foundation, and they gave the Service, its director and its personnel a clean bill of health. Except for the loss of time, everything seemed to be okay. But then, a few days later, it developed that the director had been discharged and the whole Service was to be "reorganized." (It is to the credit of Alexander Ruthven, the university's president, that this action was taken over his protest.)

The United Auto Workers, CIO, charges that, in effect, this "reorganization" means that the Service is being abolished. Victor Reuther, educational director of the UAW and Walter Reuther's brother, has issued a statement together with August Scholle, president of the Michigan CIO, and in this statement they charge that Governor Sigler and the board of regents have made of the university "a branch plant of the General Motors Corporation." They promise that when the Michigan Legislature meets they will demand "that an investigation be made of all the circumstances surrounding this betrayal of the people of Michigan, with particular regard to contributions by General Motors officials and stooges to Kim Sigler's campaign fund!"

We have seen no statement by Governor Sigler or the board of regents defending their action. Apparently they have made none. In the absence of any further data on the case, we tried turning it around and holding it upside down. It looked funny. For example: Imagine a state university in which there was a professor who taught in the business school. This professor was accused by an important union in that state of being anti-labor. The board of regents became so alarmed that they closed up the business school for three months while they made an investigation, even though this meant that the fall term would have to be delayed for several months. The Governor took part in the investigation. Finally he and the board of regents made a statement to the effect that the charges were without foundation. They gave the professor, the business school, its director, and its personnel a clean bill of health. But then a few days later they fired the professor and the directors and announced that the school would be "reorganized."

The business interests in the state were so upset by

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the incident that they charged that the university had become an adjunct of the powerful union that had first raised the question. The board of regents gave no explanation for its action. Can you imagine that happening today in this country? You can? Well, when you see it happen, drop us a line and we will know that the new era has dawned.

An investigation is what this episode calls for, with more passionate insistence than any hot-eyed crooner ever called for Chloe in the dismal swampland. Maybe Victor Reuther is leaning on it a little bit when he asks, "Who runs this State [Michigan]—the people or General Motors? Whose university is this—the people's or General Motors?" It may sound melodramatic, but in the light of what has happened, it is a pretty good question.

The University of Michigan keeps on winning football games, and that fact will keep the old grads happy forever and ever, but the workers are a different story. They aren't quite as sentimental about football.

JOHN C. CORT.

As Others See It

Justice for the Mexicans

AT THE annual meeting of the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking at El Paso, Texas, last month, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio spoke at some length about prevailing attitudes in the United States toward the Mexican:

> If the Mexican is sometimes not a good American, what can you expect from a man who during all his life was socially ostracized, deprived of civil rights, politically debased and condemned to economic servitude? If the Mexican is sometimes illiterate, whose fault is it but the fault of those who denied him an education and drove him out to work in the days of his youth?
>
> If the Mexican is sometimes diseased and delinquent, whose fault is it but the fault of those who from his birth condemned him to the unwholesome atmosphere of poverty and squalor? If some Mexicans seem to be inferior it is because we made them so.
>
> God gave them rights and gifts like all the rest of us, but we have degraded them. We English-speaking people are the losers for we are deprived of the music and laughter, the art and culture, the skills and achievements of a people who could add so much to the richness and fulness of our lives.
>
> If I were asked to mention one outstanding problem that weighs most heavily upon our Mexican people, I would say that it is the burden of undeserved poverty. I stress the word undeserved. I suppose that among all peoples one can find examples of solemn myths, folklore and bits of popular nonsense. One of the myths seriously entertained by some English-speaking Americans is that Mexican workers are lazy, slow and improvident.
>
> He would indeed be an optimist who would declare that no Mexican workers deserve that description. But the same is true of all nationals—a few are improvident but the vast majority are normal hard-working people. And right here a thought occurs to me which I believe has validity. How hard would an Irishman work if you paid him forty cents an hour? How much exuberance, vitality and enthusiasm could any people show who had been underpaid, undernourished and badly housed for half a century? . . .

What Is Christian Charity?

Archbishop L. N. de Bazelaire of Chambéry, France, in the October 15 issue of *La France Catholique,* says in part:

> We are reproached with having a lifeless Christianity, of being Christian only in word. Is that true? Cardinal Suhard [of Paris] last year declared that the Church is not in a state of decline; she is preoccupied with the apostolate and with social reforms which frequently lead to reviving the love for Christ in the Eucharist. . . .
>
> Christ wished to be loved in all His brothers, rich or poor, young or old, regardless of nationality or social condition. To be loved in those who surround us or who are confided to our charge, and to be loved through actual deeds, just judgments, hospitality of heart and home. To love Him thus is already to be a Christian.
>
> But in our days of social upheaval and economic chaos does not Christ desire to be loved, especially in the persons of those who are in physical need and pre-eminently of those who are in spiritual distress? . . .
>
> To love is to share: one's heart, one's goods, one's life. Everywhere there are human tragedies obvious or hidden. We must see them first of all. We often brush close to them without perceiving them or without being willing to see them as they are, being fearful of the silent reproach that they address to us. The heart alone can pierce the veil with which the shame or guilt of wretchedness is enclosed. But it is not a question of sentimentality, or of entering into the skin of another in order to experience a gratifying feeling of compassion. It is a question of entering in to take a person's place or one's place beside him, and of demanding of ourselves what we would demand were we in his place.
>
> Are we determined to go to any serious trouble to minister to our fellow man? Determined to aid him not only from our purse but with our influence or our credit? Are we willing to move heaven and earth in order to find him a place or an apartment? To take him in charge as long as his material condition is out of hand and perhaps to receive him into our home if he has no place of lodging? So long as we have not done something, our charity is an illusion.
>
> We cannot do everything by ourselves. God does not ask that of us. But we can do something. Have we done it? Or at least will we do it? Each man has to give his answer. If we say, "yes, I no longer hesitate," we are Christians.

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The Stage & Screen

Life With Mother

IF THERE is anything the present Lindsay and Crouse "New Play" should convince us of, it will be that it was "Life With Mother" all the time. In this instance, the crux will be the engagement ring which Father forgot, or preferred not to remember, and as usual, Vinnie wins again. I've got a sneaking suspicion most people will find the episodes in this one somewhat thin as compared to the crowded doings of the first play. However, this time we do get a look at the country domicile (Oenslager) at Harrison, N. Y.; as well as a re-glimpse of Stewart Chaney's well-known purlieus on Madison Avenue. And we meet the same people, including Margaret. The great *new* addition will be Cousin Cora's husband, a man from Ohio (it should have been Missouri), who is most excellently played by Robert Emhardt. This stalwart, supported by the ubiquitous Mr. Lindsay, the admirable Dorothy Stickney, and a new generation of graduated lesser red-heads, is a good, green, dish of alien corn. Otherwise, let us say, the Days continue at the Empire, and it is still an honorable and agreeable business all round. (*at the Empire*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Associate Freely

THE current trend in psychological movies is going full blast now. Not all of these, of course, consider the subject seriously, and some use psychological concepts without ever mentioning psychology. One of the year's best is *"Mine Own Executioner,"* an English movie which I reviewed in the August 20, 1948, COMMONWEAL, and which for some reason has so far been shown in only a few cities here. It will soon have general release and its adult approach to the subject will interest you. During the next three or four months, and perhaps much longer if this type of film wins audience approval, our screens are going to be crowded with psychoneurotics and with men and women telling what's wrong with 'em. Some of these characters may prove worth your attention, but for the present let's look at three films that are winning audiences now.

"Night Has a Thousand Eyes," without bringing up the subject of psychology or how he got that way, tells the story of a charlatan mind reader who suddenly develops the power of foresight. In no time this man, because he's really a very conscientious guy, realizes that he's fooling around with something that he should leave alone; and soon he comes to feel responsible for the tragic things he foresees. Actually, this film is a minor melodrama, but John Farrow has directed it so well that it becomes one of those effective chillers that keeps you absorbed from beginning to end. Perhaps its main fascination lies in the uneasy atmosphere that permeates the whole movie. Gail Russell and John Lund lead the large supporting cast who get worked up over the weird goings-on; and Edward G. Robinson is excellent as the man with the strange gift he never asked for.

Perhaps *"No Minor Vices"* is being released at just the right time—or then again maybe it's coming out a little too early. It is a screwball satire on Hollywood's whole trend of psychological movies. It pulls no punches and kids the field unmercifully. At the beginning an artist (Louis Jourdan) says there is not an analyst's couch in this town on which he has not lain and associated freely. He wants his neuroses left alone; so when a neighboring psychiatrist (Dana Andrews) begins taking his pictures apart from a psychological point of view, the artist decides to get even. And he does just that—at the psychiatrist's office where he lingers and meddles while supposedly making sketches, and at the psychiatrist's home where the doctor's beautiful wife (Lilli Palmer) falls for his charm and his argument that none of us are leading our own lives. Producer-director Lewis Milestone has handled this spoofing in such an adult manner that his film is liable to have only limited appeal. Perhaps its wackiness does get out of hand at times, but the movie will win laughs from those who know their psychology and from audiences who like an unpredictable brand of sophistication.

"The Snake Pit" is not one of the films being razzed by "No Minor Vices." It is a sincere and extremely well-made picture of what happened to a woman in a mental hospital. Frank Partos and Millen Brand have written a first-rate script from Mary Jane Ward's novel, and for movie purposes have improved on the original. With the help of several psychiatrists, the heroine has been given a background history which accounts for her nervous breakdown; and after this woman, with the help of shock treatment, recovers sufficiently to receive psychotherapy, this background is revealed little by little until we, as well as she, understand some of the causes for her breakdown. One can't exactly class "The Snake Pit" as entertainment; the movie is much too difficult to watch, especially for anyone looking for a couple of hours of escape. But cinematically, Producer-director Anatole Litvak has done an outstanding job. He has successfully caught the feel of a mental institution and he has been able to convey some of the ideas and sensations that a patient has. Olivia de Havilland, using practically no make-up and wearing the most uncomplimentary of clothes, gives the finest performance of her career, and she has accomplished no easy thing in making us feel how a patient like this suffers. A fine supporting cast surrounds Miss de Havilland: Leo Genn as the psychiatrist who takes a great interest in her case, Mark Stevens as her husband, and a large group of players as doctors, nurses and patients. It is with the latter that Litvak has done his most impressive characterizations, and perhaps it is the scenes of the cross-section of patients that you will remember most. Besides being outstanding as a movie, "The Snake Pit" deserves applause for putting over so well the idea that patients, even those as sick as its central figure, do recover. It is this note of hope that makes the movie takable even when it is most realistically appalling.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Italy and European Union

Rome (CIP)—Two statements, both made by Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza, have done more than anything else in recent months to crystallize Italian public opinion on foreign affairs. One was his proposal that Italy join the Brussels Pact and make a military alliance with the five Western powers. The other was his suggestion that the organization for the administration of the Marshall Plan be used politically as the basis for a federation of Europe.

Both proposals are now generally admitted to have been more or less trial balloons as far as they affect the Government. So far as the De Gasperi Cabinet has not stated its position. Count Sforza's declarations, whatever their final result, did bring out clearly in the reaction they caused the present state of public opinion on the problem of European organization and Italy's place in the cold war between Russia and the West.

The Italian public, as reflected in the expression of its many political parties, divides into three camps on the issue of foreign affairs:

1. *The camp of the Westerners,* who welcome the Sforza initiative for the incorporation of Italy in the Western Union.

2. *The Cominform camp,* consisting of the Italian Communist Party and its followers among the left-wing Socialists led by Nenni, who definitely espouse the cause of Soviet Russia.

3. *The Federalist camp,* which holds a place midway between the other two camps, claiming that it is possible to work out a European system that obviates the necessity of becoming identified completely with either America or Russia. This group consists for the most part of Saragat's Socialist Labor Party, members of the old Socialist Party, who have broken from Communist domination, and many Christian Democrats.

Among these three, the Cominform camp stands by itself, sharply opposed to the other two groups in both end and means. The Westerners and Federalists, on the other hand, are more or less united in their ultimate aim of building a united, peaceful, and democratic Europe. It is on the means of achieving this end that they divide.

The main issue between the Western and the Federalist camps is that of the organization of Europe. This has come to be defined as the issue between union and federation. The Westerners demand immediate union such as is now possible in the Western Union of the five Western powers, with emphasis upon military defense. The Federalists repudiate this in the name of a more comprehensive European Federation.

It is highly significant that the Federalist position was in essence adopted by representative Catholic leaders at the twenty-second Social Study Week, recently held at Milan. Among the resolutions approvad by this body was the following: *"If Europe is to realize its universal mission and not be merely a field for competition between blocks of antagonistic powers, it must be organized for unity in the political as well as the economic field in such a way as to contribute to human progress and to world peace."*

There is no secret of the appeal of the so-called Federalist plan to the Italian public. Its proponents frankly offer it as an answer to the question: "How can we be neutral?" This does not mean that there is any doubt of where Italy would stand in the event of a showdown, but it does indicate a great desire to avoid such a showdown between Russia and America.

Germany Between Two "Constitutions"

Cologne (CIP)—While in Berlin the Communist-dominated German People's Council is discussing a Constitution for a "United Germany," the Parliamentary Council of Bonn, in which the States of the American, British, and French occupation zones are represented, is preparing a Constitution for a "German Federal Republic." In principle, both constitutions are meant to apply to the whole of Germany. The German People's Council, however, represents only the Communists and, in the Eastern Zone, some others who have yielded to Russian pressure. The Parliamentary Council, on the other hand, is based on regional legislatures freely elected in territories representing about forty-five million people, or two-thirds of Germany.

The rules for the election of the Parliamentary Council worked out in such a manner that they favored the Social Democrats at the expense of the Christian Democrats. The two major parties hold twenty-seven seats each of a total number of sixty-five, although the Christian Democratis obtained a considerably larger popular vote. There are also five Liberal Democrats, two members of the Center Party, two members of the German Party (a conservative Federalist Party in Hanover), and two Communists.

At a preparatory meeting held at Herrenchiemsee, Bavaria, substantial agreement on most questions had been reached by Christian Democratic and Social Democratic experts on constitutional law. The problem of the electoral system is likely to be one of the few major points of dissent.

The Christian Democrats are also the strongest supporters of "States' Rights." One of the party's experts on constitutional law, Professor Ernest Wilhelm Meyer, has warned, however, against too much decentralization. In the official bulletin of the CDU for the British Zone (September 18) he stated: "Switzerland and the United States of America should be our models. . . . We can afford a federalism which has proved to be workable in these two countries. Federalist acrobatics, however, would be our perdition. . . . I consider education as the most important matter which must stay under the authority of the regional states. As a Christian and as a person who knows how much human beings can be in error, I am frightened at the idea that one Minister of Education might be allowed to exercise control over the entire youth of Germany."

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Of Soil and Men

EMERSON HYNES

IN A GENERATION in which industrialism has reached its highest point, rural literature maintains a peculiar attraction, and this season is no exception. Two of the current best sellers are plainly rural tracts, and a number of other books with a rural theme are high on the list of what Americans want to buy.

This persistence of agrarian literature becomes more interesting in the light of the changing emphasis in the rural books themselves. Until the nineteen-thirties it was predominantly the story of the rugged pioneer in his struggle to adapt himself to Nature and a new environment. It was a romantic story, an exciting conquest against a background of wilderness beauty and rigors. Whether from the purple mountains of a Zane Grey or the flat middle land of a Rolvaag or the plateau of a Willa Cather, it had an optimistic lilt. Man and Nature were both ultimately good.

Only in the last fifteen years did realism come into rural literature, long after it was standard fare in European and urban American writing. Caldwell, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Josephine Johnson and others presented another picture of rural life—bitter, twisted, sordid. The realities of drought and depression helped to confirm the disillusioned picture of rural America. Fortunately, I think, the era was brief. Most recent attempts at rural realism have been hollow and boring, a re-hashing of the first shocking exposés. The truth is that the techniques of urban realistic writing do not mix well with rural life. There may be ignorant, brutish rural people, capable of depraved actions. But the very essence of rural living, with its closeness to Nature, with its measurement of time in seasons and generations, and with its deep intimate knowledge of one family with another, makes the agrarian theme ill-adapted to the urban method of a staccato cross-section of life.

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Meanwhile, rural literature is enjoying a new phase. It has come, literally, down to earth. The best sellers of the last three years in the agrarian corner have been non-fiction, and with the exception of "The Egg and I," the soil has been a central theme. "Plowman's Folly," "An Agricultural Testament," "Pleasant Valley," "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," and "Our Plundered Planet" are typical of the trend which by scientific investigation, or through human interest incidents, or by a panoramic sweep, seeks to prove that man's best but most neglected friend is the soil.

A recent Book-of-the-Month, "Road to Survival," by William Vogt (*Sloane*. $4) carries the new theme even further. The wastage of soil has carried the human race to the verge of starvation. The author presents his evidence continent by continent. He classifies each nation's soil into nine categories of productiveness, and shows how little there is of the first three classes, the only ones which can safely be cultivated. He records the estimates of erosion, the falling water tables, and the increasing population of the world. He believes that even heroic efforts to check erosion and restore fertility will be insufficient to keep the growing population alive. He effectively upsets a cherished modern myth that industrialization can bring higher living standards or accommodate a larger population, because people need just as much food whether they're rural or urban, and the only source of food is the soil. He dismisses mechanization of agricultur as no solution, pointing out that so far it has been a greater threat to the soil than peasant methods.

All this is a little dismaying. Mr. Vogt is not one to leave his readers upset and no place to go. The whole purpose of the book and the recurrent advice, after a nod in the direction of soil conservation, is control of population. The "road to survival" is the road to education for birth control—through contraceptives, rhythm, sterilization, and any other means which will check population growth. He lashes those who are obstacles to enlightenment. The medical profession is terribly negligent for finding ways of saving and prolonging lives without promoting parallel methods of birth control. "The modern medical profession, still framing its ethics on the dubious statements of an ignorant man who lived more than two thousand years ago . . . continues to believe it has a duty to keep alive as many people as possible." Our statesmen are equally guilty. As far as any relief to needy peoples of other nations goes: "Any aid we give should be made contingent on national programs leading toward population stabilization through *voluntary* action of the people. We should insist on freedom of contraception as we insist on freedom of the press. . . . Quite as important as the Four Freedoms . . . is a Fifth Freedom—from excessive numbers of children." The scientists have been lacking in vision: "If the United States had spent two billion dollars developing such a contraceptive, instead of the atom bomb, it would have contributed far more to our national security. . . ."

Dramatically written and bolstered by an array of statistics, "Road to Survival" is likely to start millions looking in the direction of the Planned Parenthood League. Yet for all its valuable focusing of attention on the evils of man-made erosion, the book fails to deal squarely with three important points. First, it creates a false sense of urgency by failing to explain that a majority of the population and agricultural experts agree that the world can support a much larger population than it now has upon it with improved land use, seeds, and farming methods. Some qualified students estimate that as many as three times the present population could be accommodated. Dr. O. E. Baker has made (COMMONWEAL, Sept. 3, 1948) a conservative estimate of a potential 75 percent increase in crop production. Second, the book ignores authorities like R. R. Kuczynski and Enid Charles, whose analyses showing that the trend toward declining population has changed the whole attitude toward neo-Malthusianism in scientific circles. A steady advance toward overpopulation simply is not an established fact. Actually, no reliable population expert will state with certitude what the population conditions will be a generation from now. He doesn't know. But he can give us a summary of past trends. Kuczynski's analysis in his study, "The International Decline of Fertility," included figures on net reproduction rates from 1871 to 1936, and his conclusions are the opposite of Mr. Vogt's. In any case the readers of a popular work with so many moral overtones, not one in a thousand of whom would hear of Kuczynski from other sources, are entitled to know that in the past the maturation of a nation's economy and culture has

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meant a declining, not rising, population. Third, Mr. Vogt, like most writers on soil erosion and food supply, takes a far too omniscient view of man's responsibility. Paleontologists have established a rhythm of extreme variation in climatic conditions, water supply, plant and animal life, and soil movements—all of which went on long before man was created. Man must use his intelligence to preserve the gifts of Nature, but he does not have sole responsibility for the governance of the universe. God expects us to cooperate with the laws of Nature and to abide by the natural law. He did not give us the ultimate responsibility for the extent of arable land and the consequent food supply. We know that He established the family for the procreation and rearing of children, not for their prevention and limitation, that He creates each soul individually, and that He wills to adopt each one as His own in Baptism. Obviously this is not a convincing argument to those without religious faith, but for the Catholic the question of birth (population) control cannot be discussed apart from the rôle of Divine Providence.

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A thoroughly human description of soil conservation is the theme of "Malabar Farm" (Harper. $3.75) by Louis Bromfield, a book which is an enjoyable successor to "Pleasant Valley." Along with the chatty talk on crops, seed, fertilizer and soil building he brings in family and neighborly incidents and assorted lore about animals and Nature. There is as well a supply of Bromfieldian prophecies and headshaking about the sad condition of the world, but they are so soon off-set by the joyful, vigorous activity at Malabar Farm that neither author nor readers are long disconsolate. For the genuine attraction of "Malabar Farm" lies not so much in the valuable lesson of rebuilding soil as in the vicarious enjoyment of a way of life which men have idealized through the centuries. "Paradise must be like this," Bromfield reflects as, surrounded by his dogs, he pauses in his plowing to drink fresh buttermilk cooled in the stream and to view his acres and the valley below with lake and woods and flowers.

In one essential Mr. Bromfield differs from his original objectives. At first "great emphasis was placed on diversified farming and self-sufficiency." Now he has discarded them: "We have become a factory for grass in all its forms. Our livestock has become incidental to the main specialty." In his enthusiasm for the profitableness of his own project, he rises to declare, "The pattern of the general farm has, I think, outlived its usefulness and its economic justification." The difficulty with his discovery is that the great majority of family-size farms are not adaptable to one crop or specialty farming, without a waste of labor. The general farm with its emphasis on a cash surplus from several kinds of production rather than relying upon one specialty makes the most efficient use of year-around family labor. Aside from the grass-cattle type of farm, which is possible for only a minority of farmers since someone must raise the grains, there is little justification for specialty farming—unless we want corporation farms operated during peak seasons by migrant labor. Or unless we want to perpetuate the sharecropper, whose low standard of living is due in part to the fact that his productive work is limited by the specialty crop system to less than half the days of the year. Mr. Bromfield, of course, is not an advocate of either of these alternatives, and he asks all reviewers of his book to make it clear that he firmly believes in the family-size farm. It is hereby duly noted.

"Farming and Democracy," by A. Whitney Griswold (Harcourt. $3) is a scholarly attack on the concept that democracy "requires the preservation of the small, owner-operated, family size farm." He examines in detail the agricultural and political history of England, France and the United States in the last century, and he reaches some interesting conclusions. He seems to hold that if we could only get more families off the land, everyone would benefit. The remaining farmers would have the same income but fewer to divide it with. The taxpayer would be saved the cost of subsidies. The consumer would be saved the "amount added to the price of food by the various forms of government intervention." The displaced farmers "should be able to find better economic and social opportunities." Tariffs could be lowered and a step toward world peace taken. In short, democracy ought to improve on every front if we rid ourselves of the romantic Jeffersonian idea of free men on their own soil.

It is a very challenging thesis, but in spite of careful re-reading on my part, and 450 footnotes on Mr. Griswold's part, I could not find any convincing evidence. I did find a brilliant short history of agricultural policy of the three countries treated, highly informative and written with style. It is only the principal thesis that is perplexing. One difficulty is that democracy is nowhere defined; another is that Mr. Griswold is reluctant to allow any evolution to the definition of the family size farm; if a light bulb replaces the tallow candle, the agrarians have compromised. In the end Mr. Griswold himself has his doubts: "Its strongest claim on democracy . . . is this: for all its corruption by industry, business, and government it is still the outstanding form of individual economic enterprise. . . . A family farm . . . affords scope for a citizen to live and work more or less on his own terms, to develop the initiative and resourcefulness, the sense of responsibility and the self-respect that have always and everywhere been considered among the greatest assets of democracy." That sounds suspiciously as though there *were* a connection between farming and democracy.

For those who don't feel equal to speculating about soil and population and democracy but just plain want to raise a tomato, the book market is still good. One of the best offerings is "The Farmer's Handbook" (University of Oklahoma. $4.95), by John M. White. It is as up to date as DDT, and has over four hundred pages of boiled down information from government bulletins and experimental farms on every kind of grain, vegetable, fruit, animal and miscellaneous living thing which can be grown in the United States. There is additional information about soil conservation, insecticides, farm engineering and assorted subjects. Not long after I got this book a spring calf pulled me through a barbed wire fence with undesirable results to the calf and to me. I consulted "The Farmer's Handbook" to find out if the calf was too old to be sold as veal. Such is life—veal was missing from the index. But I've searched faithfully for dozens of items since and haven't found another omission. Unless one is going to specialize in vealers, this is a reliable, practical handbook for everyone from the gardener to the fulltime farmer.

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Books

The Diary of Pierre Laval. With a Preface by Josée Laval. Scribner's. $3.50.

THE publication of the *Diary of Pierre Laval* is one of several signs that the public is growing weary of discussion of the war which is but a churning of epithets, and is ready to begin inquiry into circumstances and motives.

The present work, which in the strict sense is not a diary, but Laval's notes for his own defense, provides a useful occasion to raise some questions about the general nature of collaboration.

The author's case for himself may be quickly summarized. Laval wrote that he believed the French people would suffer less with some shrewd and stubborn negotiator to fend for them against the Germans who had invaded and seized their country than they would in the absence of such an intermediary. "In brief, would it have been in the greater interest of France to abandon it to disorder and to the cruel domination of the conqueror rather than to make the attempt which, in fact, was made to hold off the conqueror by negotiation, thus alleviating, to some extent at least, the load of suffering and hardship." The argument is that even an overthrown France had to have a government, and that he accepted a prominent part in the spirit of self-sacrifice.

It is very important to guard against the mood in which "to understand all is to forgive all"; yet it is none the less true that the practical difficulties of a conquered people are sometimes overlooked. What is the proper role of a citizen when his country has been seized by an invader, and when he is told by his government that resistance is no longer practical? The Anglo-Saxon countries, which have not faced this dilemma in modern times, are prone to give smug and thoughtless answers to that question. After all, in a country of forty millions, not everyone can flee overseas; not everyone can live in the bush. The millions who remain must stand in some sort of relationship to the unwelcome guest. Should they be inarticulate as well as overthrown?

In actual cases, whether one who enters into engagements with the victorious enemy is to be regarded as a traitor to his country, or as a patriot called upon to perform an onerous duty seems to have turned upon a purely pragmatic point. If the enemy is destined to be ousted soon, he is the former; if the enemy is there for an indefinite stay, resistance is but intransigence and may do the country more harm than good. And while this standard applies, one's political virtue depends on his skill as a military forecaster. In 1940 Russia was a German ally, and Britain appeared falling. A Frenchman who at that moment knew that the United States would enter the war and turn the tide either must have had power of clairvoyance, or have been in unusually close contact with Washington. As long as the war was but a European war, which the Germans seemed certain of winning, Laval was "right"; later, when it had turned into a war of a Grand Alliance against Germany, he was "wrong." History is replete with cases more or less comparable. Which were the more patriotic, the Filipinos who collaborated with American forces in 1900, or the Moro tribesmen who fought them? Should the Boer General Smuts now be despised as a collaborator with the British? And what of the Germans in Berlin today who are collaborating with the Americans? If the Americans remain, they are "right"; if the Americans withdraw either voluntarily or involuntarily and Germany goes communist, they will be "wrong," probably to the extent of Laval and lose their lives. Laval seems to have been aware of this pragmatic standard when he wrote, "Call in question if you will my good sense, my political sagacity or statesmanship, but not my patriotism."

But if one looks at this problem morally, and not pragmatically, it will appear that what a man is finally judged by is his loyalty to an ideal of justice. If he allies himself with unjust powers, he is a traitor, regardless of whether they come from without or from within. A question of far more general concern then is, what should be the response of a citizen to his own government when it comes to him with unclean hands? Does obedience to a guilty government make the citizen guilty? The upshot of the Nazi trials is that one must place his conscience above his formal allegiance to the state. After this verdict, obviously there is nothing left to the divine right of national sovereignty. It will be interesting to see whether the nations which have made this a principle of international law are willing to admit its application at home. By such a test, to employ a well-known example from our own history, Henry David Thoreau is vindicated for having refused to "collaborate" with the United States in the Mexican War; and any conscientious objector who says that he regards war as the sum of all crimes has an excellent case at law.

The truth about Laval is that he was incapable of rising to such a conception. He was such a *little* man. It is perhaps unfair to base conclusions solely on a document composed in distress, but there is nothing whatever in these notes to indicate imagination, breadth of mind, elevation of sentiment, or even skill in argumentation. Everything that is said is miserably *ad hoc*. His horizons were incredibly narrow. I will cite what seems to me the prime illustration of this. "Honor," he wrote, "is there wheresoever and in whatsoever form the interests of our country can best be defended." He speaks slurringly of ideologies. For him, politics was but trading, carried on in a somewhat more exalted sphere. The modern world seems more and more to thrust these pettifogging souls into positions of highest responsibility. Their very shortsightedness is often a factor in their popularity. But the world, it is the old world yet in the sense that tragic mistakes are paid for in tragic consequences. When Laval was led out to be shot after his judicial farce of a trial, he can hardly have looked like an arch villain. He too much resembles a little man who guessed wrong, and who was sacrificed to the pent-up passion of men who were no bigger than he was. RICHARD M. WEAVER.

Late Have I Loved Thee. Ethel Mannin. Putnam. $3.00.

MISS MANNIN'S twenty-sixth novel is easily her best. This story of the selfish, brilliant Francis Sable, a writer somewhat too continuously compared with his contemporary, Aldous Huxley, and his tempera-painting, serious sister Cathryn, is well told. It is based on the true story of Father John Sullivan, S.J. The introduction is too long—London, Paris, the Riviera of the twenties, with the inevitably heroic White Russian, and the inevitably amoral American girl are detailed in order

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to provide the right background of dust, the proper mulching of ashes.

Francis and Cathryn are the two younger children of Sir John and Lady Sable. Lady Sable became a Catholic, as did the mother of Sue Lester, a girl in love with Francis, and also rather a good painter. Francis and Cathryn loved mountain climbing, but their mother had a phobia about mountains, and forbade Cathryn (much, much too often called "ewe lamb") to climb outside England. Cathryn and Francis go to an Austrian village to ski, and there they fall in love with the son and daughter of the Gasthaus keeper, Johann and Lotte.

The Austrian scenes are beautifully done: the English highbrows thawing in the good unsophisticated warmth of the Austrian inn and its inhabitants; Cathryn's conversion via Johann and Saint Augustine; and the return to Austria in the late spring, when Francis takes Cathryn climbing because the friend with whom he was going burst his appendix; these are admirably described. The idyllically pure love between Cathryn and Johann also is lovelily told, clear and unsentimental and simple.

What is unnecessarily involved seems to be Cathryn's relation to Francis. Her determination not to allow her fiancé to accompany them up the Drindelhorn, her refusal to go to Mass until she had been received, and then suddenly her going to Mass and Rosary and Benediction without any explanation of the one line or the other, seem all very complicated and un-Catholic. Surely a young and devout convert, newly and happily betrothed, wouldn't be so cussedly self-centered in her whims and wills? Cathryn's masochistic wish to climb with Francis, and only with Francis, because he didn't want her to, is a great chunk of self-ice, unthawed either by love of God or love of Johann, and is not convincing.

But Cathryn's fall and death are admirably told, to the last detail, Francis retching uncontrollably at the sight of his sister's blood. Francis' remorseful flight from self, his driving of a miserable American secretary to suicide, are an unnecessary interruption: the story only begins again with Francis' return to the Drindelhorn to find himself, and God and Cathryn. After a lot of rather unnecessarily luxurious little dinners with various girls loved various ways, Francis becomes a Jesuit priest in Ireland. And Ireland, like Paris, seems neither Francis' spiritual climate nor Miss Mannin's: there is only one authentic moment in all the soughing of the brogue and the bogs, when he climbs a muddy little pilgrimage hill. Again, there are unCatholic asides: Franciscans are surely unlikely to call some one "Brother Francis" who was not even a Catholic? What can be "the intensity of mystic experience of the supreme sacrament of Holy Communion" apart from the Mass, as experienced by a non-Catholic? "Beware of feelings," Dom Chapman wisely said "Protestants have them," and, in spite of the authenticity of the natural feelings—the mountainy episodes, the agreeables and disagreeables of eating, catching trains, scrubbing floors—there is a lack of grasp of the supernatural. *Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint*—who hugs too much, holds badly, and the whole account of Francis' life as an Irish Jesuit is undigested, as are the lumps of Augustine with which the whole book is larded. Surely Francis wouldn't have "come to believe that he had been endowed with the grace of a special gift of intercession for the sick, and that this work was of *even greater importance* than that of teaching the

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young?" It is hardly possible that a new Jesuit should have been left so undirected, so unstitched. And the preoccupation with the working of miracles gives a naïve quality to the sanctity we are supposed to find in Francis: mortifications, miracles, these are surely the results of holiness, not the path thereto. A turning of the whole creature, a sunning-through by the light of the invisible sun, so that the incandescence is total, white-hot, complete, is what Francis presumably experienced; instead he is shown journeying into "the timeless world of space and eternity to bring people back from the edge of the grave." He perhaps did, but there is a kind of gabbling and hurry about the telescoping of so long a journey into a few pages at the end of a long novel. Better have cut the unregenerate Francis to a page, or two, and confined the Jesuit to an obituary, and have given us the splendid Austrian scenes to stand by themselves, as they do. Miss Mannin has written a one-third excellent novel.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Stalingrad. Theodor Plievier. Appleton. $3.00.

FROM Caesar's *Gallic Wars* to Victor Hugo's description of Waterloo, great war literature was primarily military in its focus. Intent on giving an accurate, over-all picture, writers for centuries emphasized the strategy and tactics of war at the expense of its human element. Stendhal in his description of Waterloo, and Stephen Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage* initiated the trend which has dominated recent war writing. Abandoning the panoramic view, these writers chose to describe war as it touched a single individual. Theodor Plievier has successfully combined both types of war literature in a novel which depicts the battle of Stalingrad as the scene of the disintegration of the German army and as a time of physical and moral crisis in the lives of individual men.

Plievier gives this breadth and depth to his work by the employment of a device which would create confusion in the hands of a less skilful author. He centers his action around the experiences of fifteen or twenty members of the German Sixth Army ranging from the Commander-in-chief to a grave digger. The reader, shifted constantly from one area in the Stalingrad pocket to another, shares the experiences of doctors, chaplains, tank officers and infantrymen. Plievier, viewing the situation from these varying angles, demonstrates that lack of supplies, disorganization, strategic disadvantages and the Russian winter made the breakdown of the German army inevitable. One striking description after another presents this breakdown in terms of human suffering. Piling detail upon detail, he forces on the reader a realization of what it was like to be one of that "battleweary, exhausted, lice-ridden, bloodless, enervated mass of men."

Stalingrad meant death for thousands. It meant excruciating, torturous suffering for hundreds of thousands more. It dehumanized men in the dreadful struggle for existence and made criminals of the officers who ordered their troops to certain, useless death. To Sergeant Gnotke, Stalingrad was a vast grave with a seemingly endless stream of corpses requiring burial. During the retreat he was relieved of his duties as grave digger but his contact with pitiful, human wrecks made the corpses seem preferable for while "they showed their gaping wounds, their glazed eyes, their gut . . . they did not talk and they no longer hoped for anything."

Despite Plievier's telling descriptions of the carnage of Stalingrad, to him the greatest Nazi crime was not this destruction of men's bodies but the corruption of their souls. The exploding shells of Stalingrad aroused a few from the nightmare of thirty years. For some this sudden insight merely added to a painful death the knowledge that they were dying for a contemptible cause. Yet at least two men survived Stalingrad who hated the Fuehrer, not because he had lost the war, but because he had begun it. Two men remained who had resisted moral disintegration. On this fact Plievier bases his optimism for the future.

CATHERINE ANN CLINE.

Meredith. Siegfried Sassoon. Viking. $3.50.

MR. SASSOON has written a thoroughly honest biography of George Meredith. There is no doubt as to the genuine affection that prompted it, and it is all the more valuable because of the author's amused detachment and unflinching penetration. Siegfried Sassoon sings no paeans, shouts no admonitions to the reader (legion, in very truth) who has never had the patience nor the desire to finish a Meredith poem, let alone a novel. He is not attempting to sell this British novelist and poet. It is, rather, an exhibition of forgotten, hence tarnished, beauties and truths.

Even from the necessarily curtailed quotations, one must acknowledge Meredith's athletic *and* perceptive force, his swinging championing of Nature, his delightful wit and fresh twists of language; these are his credits. On the less palatable side of the ledger are his exhausting paganism, the frequently lengthy imposition of his novels, the beautiful obscurity of much of his verse, and the often monstrous self-indulgence of an artist who prefers to please himself rather than *any* kind of an audience.

On the subject of Nature, I cannot help but feel that the *most* said by the *least* said is far more compelling than the most sensitively turned descriptive phrases running on and over, and by their unconscionable weight, flogging one to numbness. Meredith, for all his inner eye and deep breathing is guilty of just such auto-intoxication in all phases of his writing, be it subject or style.

Mr. Sassoon, perhaps without wholly meaning to, includes these gauds among the real curios of his exhibition. By displaying the neglected nuggets, he has made a very creditable claim for Meredith in English letters. At the same time he has shown up the author's faults in an uncompromising Kleig light. Such proddings and recollections are valuable because of the gold that can be salvaged from the dross. Meredith's faults are not much minimized, nor are they greatly enhanced by the chance riches which have been and are generally overlooked.

If one were to wander through a museum in which the exhibits were unmarked, and there were no guides nor guide-books, he would feel doubly rewarded to find an unheralded embossment, let us say, on the handle of a pistol, or golden threads in a seemingly ordinary, ancient vase. It would not only be heart-warming, but aesthetically thrilling as well. The workmanship of both pistol and vase might readily have the marks of greatness. So it is with the prose and poetry of George Meredith, and so we are reminded in this highly satisfactory and affectionate biography.

No man, however Olympian, could sustain the brilliant

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onrush of ideas and words that is George Meredith. That he kept atop the peak as often as he did is no minor achievement, however flagrant his faults. It is, after all, to the peaks to which one ultimately looks. Whether one loves or is bored by Nature, society, philosophy, linguistics, one can, by oftentimes hard work, find vitality and greatness in all these fields where Meredith walked.

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ELIZABETH JOHNSON.

The Burnished Blade. Lawrence Schoonover. Macmillan. $3.00.

THE *Burnished Blade* is an adventure story built around opium smuggling and political intrigue in 15th century Europe and Trebizond (on the Black Sea). Joan of Arc, slave girls, knights, fair ladies, heralds, emperors, eunuchs, villains and many others more ordinary have been collected from Mr. Schoonover's imagination and three years of research, the latter of which is betrayed by the many interesting and colorful historical details.

While the writing does not have that come-hither quality which should glue one to an historical novel, the style is straightforward and easy-swinging and the story is told very skilfully.

Instead of torrid love-scenes to catch the public eye there are some rather vivid descriptions of burnings and impalements. Excellent reading for a long subway ride or a bad head cold, and those who are squeamish can skip.

VIRGINIA BENNETT.

Nathaniel Hawthorne. Randall Stewart. Yale University Press. $4.00.

THIS BOOK is an interesting example of the limitations of a certain rather mechanical type of literary scholarship. Professor Stewart has been digging around in the Hawthorne papers for at least twenty years now, performing such scholarly tasks as editing the *Notebooks,* collecting evidence as to the nature of Hawthorne's political activities and restoring those portions of the letters and journals that Mrs. Hawthorne had seen fit to ink out. And now he has taken the material accumulated over the years (neatly indexed on 5 x 8 cards, no doubt) and compiled it into a new biography of Hawthorne which appears, on the surface, to present the real man previously buried under a mass of legends and misinterpretations. Professor Stewart's thesis is that Hawthorne was not the brooding, ghost-ridden figure that we have always thought, but was rather a fairly normal sort of fellow, happy in his family life and active in the affairs of the world. His repudiation of the familiar interpretation of Hawthorne as an essentially solitary man haunted by his Puritan ancestors rests on three points: Hawthorne had, throughout his life, many friends and a normal social life; he had a happy marriage; and he was a successful and extremely practical politician.

Stewart has, through his extensive research, dug out a mass of data which more than suffices to prove these three points, and, that is, no doubt, an important contri-

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bution to our knowledge of Hawthorne. But that is the most that can be said of this book, for as an attempt to describe Hawthorne the whole man, it is hopelessly superficial and quite inadequate. There can be no doubt, after publication of Stewart's findings, that Hawthorne led a more normal life than has generally been believed; but a man can be solitary and ghost-ridden in the midst of friends and a happy family, and Stewart does nothing to show that the mind of Hawthorne was essentially different from that we have always known.

Indeed, this book ignores Hawthorne's thought almost completely: the emphasis is on the surface activities of his day-to-day existence, and no attempt is made to correlate this with the life of his mind. This defect seems to flow from the author's very scholarship: Professor Stewart restricts himself to those aspects of life that can be established through minute research. The fact that Hawthorne had numerous acquaintances and several close friends can be proved nicely by anyone who has the patience to collect appropriate passages from the correspondence and the journals, but to penetrate to the very soul of a man (as a real biography should do) requires something more than a mere accumulation of notes. Professor Stewart is so busy setting down the details of his subject's financial difficulties, the nature of his work as American Consul at Liverpool, and the state of his health in Italy that there is no time to consider the influence of Puritan ancestry on a sensitive young boy, or the impact of Europe on the New England mind. The result of this neglect of intellect is to present us with a Hawthorne leveled down to such mediocrity that it is difficult to imagine his writing the *Life of Peirce,* let alone *The Scarlet Letter.* JAMES E. NEWMAN.

As Luck Would Have It. Otto Eisenchiml and E. B. Long. Bobbs. $3.00.

IF, IN SPITE of Hitler, you still naïvely believe that economic forces determine the course of history, you will not like this book. If you give due consideration to the influence of human agents, you will be quite favorably impressed with it. The authors have made a detailed study of chance and coincidence in the Civil War. Fifteen chapters analyze the same number of situations which could easily have had results quite different from those we correctly associate with them. The authors show how profoundly the tide of war might have been influenced if a few things had happened otherwise than in the way they did. For example, it is plausibly argued that if yellow fever had visited Charleston in 1860, as it had been doing each year during that period, the Civil War would not have begun when it did, and it certainly would not have begun at Fort Sumter, if it began at all. Rather convincing evidence is furnished, moreover, to show that the Civil War might have been avoided almost at the last moment had the Confederate General Pierre G. T. Beauregard either completely observed or completely disregarded the orders he received at Charleston from the Confederate Secretary of War.

There is an interesting chapter concerned with the proposal that chlorine gas shells be used by the North in the Civil War. Lincoln was evidently opposed to the use of such an instrument. He evidently did not feel that every conceivable instrument of destruction may be used in time of war. There is an excellent chapter outlining the work of Adams in London. Reading it, we realize that he very possibly might have failed, with perhaps catastrophic results to the North. The book is easily one of the most unusual ever published in the field of Civil War history. The authors have shown rather clearly that the outcome of the war was not necessarily a northern victory; with more "luck" the Southerners might have achieved the separation they so sincerely desired. PAUL KINIERY.

Blood of the Martyrs. Naomi Mitchison. Whittlesey. $3.50.

MRS. NAOMI MITCHISON has written at least two first-rate historical novels. Her *The Conquered,* which is a novel about Britain under the Romans, is still astonishingly alive although written over twenty years ago about a period nearly twenty centuries gone; *The Corn King and the Spring Queen,* a re-creation of Black Sea life and culture in very early times, is an enchantment; fall under its spell, and there is no escape, you will fall under a bus before you realize you are in the atomic, not the Arcadian, age. But this 500-page polemic is dreadfully dull: the early Christians as Mrs. Mitchison presents them are as celluloid as the rest of her Romans. The book is a catch-all of endlessly tedious and completely artificial conversations. Obviously Mrs. Mitchison's agent told her that a novel should be 75 percent conversation. Obediently she has turned everything that could be description, *oratio obliqua,* narrative, or character study, and reduced it to the lowest common denominator of "My dear boy, you talk as if I did it myself." "You being decent to me too, Sir." Harmless enough once in a long while, such quotes become intolerably banal in the aggregate. One "Seems silly to me" is perhaps forgivable"; Umpteen "Oh, it's just plain silly" are unbearable. Five hundred pages with never an uncommonplace thought or word becomes practically unreadable. It is to be doubted whether even a Comic Book could be so consistently moronic in language. And this from a woman who got a First in Greats (Classics) at Oxford, and who can, when she wills, write admirable English. But the poor lady is obviously suffering from verbal diarrhea, and as a picture of early Christianity, "Blood of the Martyrs" would be nauseous if it were not so ridiculous. It is a radishy pastiche of early communism. This Christianity whose sacraments are fraternity pins, this Buchmanist faith that casts no shadow of an interior life, this religion without the most skeletal even of theologies, like Blake's Jesus "will not do, either for Englishman or Jew." A. F.

CONTRIBUTORS

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The annual number devoted to juvenile books is this year under the general editorship of Claire Huchet Bishop, author of "Pancakes Paris" and "France Alive." Other authors in this special issue will include Louise Seaman Bechtel, Ernestine Evans, Arthur Ransome (whose millionth children's book has just been sold), Clifton Utley ("Will Television Make Illiterate Children") and Charles Vildrac.

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